

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Bat monitoring

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature

Monitoring, or regularly going out and counting plants or animals following an established protocol, provides biologists with key information on the distribution of plants and animals and the well-being of individual populations.

Though well-developed, nation-wide monitoring programs are in place for birds and other animals, until now there hasn't been a similar program for North American bats. Earlier this year, the Forest Service published guidelines for participating in NABat, the first step in establishing a monitoring program for North American bats, and in doing so, provide natural resource managers the information they need to manage bat populations effectively, detect early warning signs of population declines, and estimate extinction risks.

White-nose syndrome has killed millions of bats since it was first detected in 2006. The continuing spread of the disease, increasing wind energy development across the continent, and intensified land use changes have pressed the need for some way to estimate the populations of bat species across the continent.

Bats play essential roles in the health of both the environment and the economy, pollinating plants, dispersing seeds – and consuming tons of insects. In the U.S. alone, bats save billions of dollars in pest control each year by eating insects that damage crops.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.